



Dr. Lindsey Hall, Superintendent
Mahomet-Seymour Schools

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Dear Bulldog Families,

In 3 short days, our children will start the 20-21 school year in the Mahomet-Seymour Schools. In order to describe the start of this school year, the use of many adjectives is required--unprecedented, uncharted, unique, extraordinary, unparalleled, bizarre, and I am also going to say hopeful.

We know that COVID 19 and our plans to reopen our schools have changed and altered your family's plans, changed lives and created many inconveniences--for not only you, but for our staff, our community and most importantly, our students. Each of us and our families have had remarkable and unexpected experiences with this pandemic--some of them positive and some of them negative. Our school year is going to be no different, and I'll add two more descriptors--unpredictable and evolving.

Our students have not been in school for five months--our last day together in the Mahomet-Seymour Schools was March 12, 2020. The remote learning plan that we offered from March 23-May 22 was only meant to, and was clearly explained as having a focus on stopping the loss of learning. Time for instruction was limited each day, attendance wasn't taken and grades were not reported. Obviously, this is a vast departure from "doing school" as we traditionally knew it prior to the pandemic.

About 75% of our students are returning to in person learning this fall, with about 25% of our students have chosen to learn totally off campus. Whichever learning model you have chosen as a family, it is important to acknowledge and remember that our students, regardless of their age, will need time and patience to reintegrate into a full day of learning, interacting and engaging with a teacher and with other students. Each student will experience this differently, and it's also important to recognize that staff and families are in different spaces regarding the COVID 19 pandemic and their experiences over the past 5 months.

As public educators, we are doing something totally new and never tried before. It's also new for parents and of course, our amazing students! In school, we plan to take the first 1-2 weeks to provide intentional instruction and modeling of routines, procedures, operational guidelines, and most importantly, getting to know each other in the new teaching environment we're creating. This includes re-establishing the teacher-student relationship, getting to know one another and re-engaging with students and families. There will likely be some technical difficulties, glitches, questions, frustrations and other things that don't go as planned--for families and staff alike. This is going to happen everywhere as students return to school at all levels. It's also important to acknowledge that it is likely, at some point, we might need to readjust our plans in some way. I cannot emphasize enough how excited we, as a staff, are to return to school, but it is balanced with some apprehension about the reimagining of instruction and public education, as well as being concerned about the ever present uncertainties that seem to be ingrained in the pandemic.

I want to acknowledge the work of our entire staff in getting ready to return to school. This work started on May 27, 2020. They have been incredible! It's taken all summer to plan, prepare, discuss, research and write our plan to return to school. Once the plan was decided upon, there have been numerous

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details to work out--and we continue to do that. Summer has not been “normal” for anyone in the Mahomet-Seymour Schools or community.

In closing, let’s keep the lines of communication open, extend grace, compassion and patience to each other, support one another and let’s first assume that everyone is acting with the best of intentions. Wednesday, August 19, 2020 will be an historic day in the Mahomet-Seymour Schools, but one constant remains: it’s always a great day to be a Bulldog!

Thank you for the honor of serving as your superintendent of schools, I wish you the best for this coming school year!

Very sincerely,

Dr. Lindsey A. Hall

Superintendent of Schools